

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 EA-12 ISO-00 AID-05 AF-10 ARA-14 EUR-12
NEA-10 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-08
FMC-02 INR-07 NSAE-00 CG-00 DLOS-09 OES-07 OIC-02
PM-05 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-15 TRSE-00 /163 W

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R 230624Z DEC 77

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6576

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ESCAP, OCON

SUBJ: FIRST SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON SHIPPING, TRANSPORT AND
COMMUNICATIONS, ESCAP, BANGKOK, DECEMBER 14-22, 1977

PASS DOT AND MARAD

REF: STATE 283428

1. MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS, H.E. SURAKIJ MAYALARP OF THAILAND
OPENED SESSION. IN HIS INTRODUCTORY REMARKS HE INDICATED THAT
HE WAS PLEASED TO NOTE THAT THE COMMITTEE PLANS TO DEVOTE GREATER
ATTENTION TO DEVELOPMENT OF SHIPPING, PORTS AND RELATED FACILITIES.
HE STATED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT'S POLICY IS TO PROMOTE PRIVATE
INVESTMENT IN FACILITIES RELATED TO THE TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICA-
TIONS SECTORS. HE ALSO EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THE COMMITTEE WOULD
GIVE GREATER ATTENTION TO FREIGHT RATE PROBLEMS WHICH HAVE CAUSED
CONSIDERABLE CONCERN TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. SEVERAL DELE-
GATIONS WERE EXPECTING THE MINISTER TO ANNOUNCE THAT HIS GOVERN-
MENT HAS SIGNED THE ASIA-PACIFIC TELECOMMUNITY CONSTITUTION AND
WERE DISAPPOINTED WHEN HE DID NOT MENTION THE STATUS OF HIS
COUNTRY'S APPROVAL OF THE CONSTITUTION. THE HEADQUARTERS OF
THE ORGANIZATION IS TO BE LOCATED IN BANGKOK, AND ACCORDING
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TO AN ESCAP CONSULTANT, THAILAND'S DELAY IN SIGNING THE CON-
STITUTION CONTINUES TO DELAY THE INAUGURAL SESSION WHICH WAS
PREVIOUSLY PLANNED FOR AUGUST 1977. THE PHILIPPINES AND
SINGAPORE HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE
ORGANIZATION HEADQUARTERED IN THEIR COUNTRIES.

2. J.B.P. MARAMIS, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, ESCAP, WELCOMED DELE-

GATES TO THE FIRST SESSION OF THE NEWLY REFORMULATED COMMITTEE, AND FOCUSED MAINLY ON DEVELOPMENTS IN SHIPPING, TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS IN THE REGION DURING THE PAST YEAR. HE REQUESTED DELEGATIONS TO GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO AUGMENTING RESOURCES OF THE SECRETARIAT TO ENABLE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF SHIPPING PORTS AND INLAND WATERWAYS: MOST DELEGATIONS INCLUDING U.S. CONGRATULATED THE SECRETARIAT FOR THE REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS IN SHIPPING PORTS AND INLAND WATERWAYS. INDONESIA DEL CAUTIONED THE COMMITTEE AGAINST DRAWING CONCLUSIONS FROM THE PUBLISHED STATISTICS. BANGLADESH SUPPORTED BY THE PHILIPPINES AND SRI LANKA DELS POINTED OUT THE REVIEW'S INADEQUATE COVERAGE OF INLAND WATERWAYS AND SUGGESTED THAT FUTURE ISSUES OF THE REPORT BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE INFORMATION ON CHANGES IN FREIGHT RATES, FREIGHT RATE NEGOTIATIONS, AND PORT CHARGES LEVIED BY VARIOUS PORT ADMINISTRATIONS. AUSTRALIAN DEL SUPPORTED BY THE NETHERLANDS SUGGESTED INCLUSION OF INTERACTION ON INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS. DESPITE SECRETARIAT'S REQUEST THAT DELS TABLE LENGTHY REPORTS AND NOT TAKE THE COMMITTEE'S TIME BY READING THEM, THE UNCTAD DEL FOLLOWED BY SEATAC AND IMCO DELS WASTED MOST OF THE FIRST MORNING OF THE SESSION READING LENGTHY NON INTERESTING AND RAMBLING STATEMENTS.

4. MANPOWER DEVELOPMENTS. DISCUSSION ON THIS ITEM FOCUSED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON THE VARIOUS TRAINING FACILITIES.
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TIES AVAILABLE IN MEMBER COUNTRIES. IMCO, BANGLADESH, INDIA, INDONESIA, JAPAN, KOREA, USSR AND PAKISTAN EXPLAINED THE TYPE OF MARITIME TRAINING THAT THEY ARE PREPARED TO PROVIDE TO MEMBER COUNTRIES. THE AUSTRALIAN DEL SUPPORTED BY THE U.S. DEL STRESSED THE NEED TO AVOID DUPLICATION OF WORK AND THE NEED TO HAVE CLOSE COORDINATION OF ALL TRAINING IN THIS AREA WITH IMCO.

5. DEVELOPMENT OF MARITIME POLICY AND INSTITUTIONS. IN DISCUSSING THIS ITEM THE JAPANESE DEL WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE NETHERLANDS DEL CAUTIONED THE SECRETARIAT ABOUT THE DISRUPTIVE EFFECTS THAT FREIGHT STUDY UNITS COULD HAVE ON INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING IF SUCH UNITS TRY TO CONTROL BOTH OUTBOUND AND INBOUND CARGO.

6. DEVELOPMENT OF MERCHANT MARINE AND SHIPPING SERVICES: THIS ITEM SPARKED THE GREATEST AMOUNT OF INTEREST. THE UNCTAD DEL OPENED THE DISCUSSION WITH A REPORT ON THE 4TH UNCTAD INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY GROUP (IPG) MEETING ON THE CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL MULTIMODAL TRANSPORT. HE REPORTED THAT DEVELOPED COUNTRIES REACTED NEGATIVELY TO THE CONVENTION WHICH HAS SUPPORT OF THE G-77. HE

EMPHASIZED THE NEED TO REACH A COMMON UNDERSTANDING BEFORE THE 5TH IPG MEETING. THE AUSTRALIAN DEL FOLLOWED WITH A SUPPORTING STATEMENT AND URGED COUNTRIES IN THE REGION TO HOLD CONSULTATIONS JUST PRIOR TO THE NEXT MEETING IN THE IPG WITH A VIEW TO ASSESSING THE TECHNICAL SUITABILITY OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE CONVENTION TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF COUNTRIES OF THE REGION. THE BANGLADESH, INDIAN, PHILIPPINES AND INDONESIAN DELS IN SUPPORT OF AUSTRALIA'S RECOMMENDATION, SUGGESTED HOLDING A REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON THIS SUBJECT. THE UMS. DEL SUPPORTED THE SUGGESTION TO HOLD REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS, BUT STATED THAT THE USG REMAINS OPPOSED TO A MULTIMODAL CONVENTION WITH EXTENSIVE PUBLIC LAW PROVISIONS IN AREAS SUCH AS CUSTOMS, LICENSING, CARGO SHARING AND INSURANCE. THE JAPANESE DEL SUGGESTED THAT ESCAP LEAVE UNCLASSIFIED

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DISCUSSION OF THE MULTIMODAL CONVENTION TO THE GLOBAL GROUP. CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTY WAS ENCOUNTERED IN DRAFTING SUITABLE LANGUAGE FOR THIS ITEM. DURING DISCUSSION THIS AGENDA ITEM, THE AUSTRALIAN DEL REQUESTED CLARIFICATION ON THE REGIONAL SHIPPING NETWORK PROJECT FINANCED BY THE NETHERLANDS AND INQUIRED HOW IT FITS IN WITH THE UNCTAD PROGRAM. KOLUDROVIC, CHIEF ESCAP'S SHIPPING WING, IN FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION INFORMED THE COMMITTEE THAT UNCTAD HAS ITS OWN PORGRAM IN SHIPPING AND THE SECRETARIAT IS DEEPLY INVOLVED IN ITS OWN ACTIVITIES. THIS STATEMENT INSPIRED A STRONG DEBATE BETWEEN THE AUSTRALIAN DEL WHO INSISTED ON CLOSE COORDINATION OF ALL ESCAP SHIPPING ACTIVITIES WITH UNCTAD, INCLUDING THOSE FUNDED BY UNDP, AND

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OES-07 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AF-10 ARA-14 EUR-12
NEA-10 OIC-02 PM-05 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-02
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THE SECRETARIAT WHICH FELT THAT UNCTAD WANTED TO EXECRCISE UNDUE CONTROL OVER ITS ACTIVITIES. THE MATTER WAS RESOLVED WITH THE DELS STRESSING THAT ESCAP SHOULD EXPAND ITS ROLE AS THE EXECUTING AGENCY FOR ALL EXTRA BUDGETARY ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING THAT FROM UNDP, FOR ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS WHICH HAVE REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS. THE DELS URGED THE UNDP AND OTHER UN AGENCIES TO RECOGNIZE SUCH A ROLE IN MAKING DECISIONS OR ALLOCATING RESPONSIBILITIES AND FUNDS FOR PROJECTS.

7. DEVELOPMENT OF PORTS AND PORT MANAGEMENT: MOST DELS INCLUDING US DEL URGED THE SECRETARIAT TO GIVE HIGH PRIORITY TO THIS ITEM.

8. INLAND WATER TRANSPORT: DISCUSSION OF THIS ITEM RESULTED IN US DEL AGREEING TO ARRANGE A PROGRAM FOR A VISIT TO THE U.S. OF AN ESCAP EXPERT IN INLAND WATERWAYS PROVIDED UNDP OR SOME OTHER SOURCE PROVIDES FUNDS AND RELATED COSTS. DETAILS OF THIS AGREEMENT AS REPORTED IN SEPTEL (BANGKOK 35722).

9. SHIPPING ORGANIZATIONS AND COOPERATION: THE CONSENSUS OF THE DELS FROM THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN THE REGION WAS THAT SHIPPERS DO NOT GET A FAIR DEAL FROM SHIPOWNERS AND MUST ORGANIZE SHIPPING COUNCILS TO COPE WITH INCREASING FREIGHT RATES. THE BANGLADESH DEL SUGGESTED HAVING UNCTAD DETERMINE WHAT UNCLASSIFIED

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IT CONSIDERS TO BE REASONABLE RATES. THE JAPANESE DEL STRESSED THE NEED TO DEVELOP A SPIRIT OF COOPERATION BETWEEN SHIP-OWNERS AND SHIPPERS.

10. TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: NO DISCUSSION ON MATTERS UNDER THIS AGENDA ITEM WAS SIGNIFICANT TO USG.

11. TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS WING: THE DISCUSSION OF THE TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS AGENDA ITEMS WAS RELATIVELY NON-CONTROVERSIAL. THE MAIN POINTS STRESSED UNDER THE VARIOUS AGENDA ITEMS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(A) ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF RAILWAYS: THE JAPANESE, FRENCH, USSR AND INDIAN DELS AGREED TO CONTINUE TO CONSIDER REQUESTS FOR RAILROAD ASSISTANCE. THE U.S. DEL NOTED THE HIGH PRIORITY GIVEN TO RAILWAY TRANSPORT AND STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF MAKING A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS BEFORE AGREEING TO CONSTRUCT COSTLY UNDERGROUND RAILWAY SYSTEMS. THE US DEL ALSO PROVIDED THE SECRETARIAT DOCUMENTS ON THE U.S. RAILROAD RESEARCH INFORMATION SERVICE.

(B) IN ADDITION TO POSTING SEVERAL DISPLAYS ON DEVELOPMENT

OF ITS RAILROAD SYSTEM, THE USSR DISTRIBUTED A NUMBER OF DOCUMENTS WHICH THE SECRETARIAT LISTED AS AN ANNEX TO THE DRAFT REPORT. THE INDIAN DEL, WITH SUPPORT OF THE PHILIPPINES DEL, NOTED THAT THIS VIOLATES ESCAP'S PROCEDURES AND THE SECRETARIAT AGREED TO DELETE THE ANNEX FROM THE REPORT.

(C) ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF HIGHWAYS AND HIGHWAY TRANSPORT: THE PAKISTAN AND THAILAND DELS QUESTIONED THE NEED FOR THE HIGH UNIFORM STANDARDS RECOMMENDED BY THE SECRETARIAT FOR INTERNATIONAL ROADS IN THE REGION. THE THAILAND DEL NOTED THE DIFFICULTY OF CONSTRUCTING ROADS 7 METERS WIDE IN MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN AND QUESTIONED THE NEED TO CONSTRUCT ROADS TO PERMIT SPEEDS OF UP TO 120 KM/HR. THE US DEL RECOMMENDED CHANGES IN THIS AND THE DOCUMENT UNCLASSIFIED

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DEVELOPED FOR RECORDING HIGHWAY DATA AND EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR AN ADEQUATE HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE PROGRAM FOR COUNTRIES OF THE REGION.

(D) FACILITATION OF INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC: THE SECRETARIAT URGED MEMBER COUNTRIES TO RATIFY THE 1968 CONVENTIONS ON ROAD TRAFFIC AND ROAD SIGNS AND SIGNALS. IT WAS NOT NECESSARY FOR THE US DEL TO INDICATE ITS POSITION ON THIS ITEM.

(E) POSTAL SERVICES AND TOURISM: NO DISCUSSION ON MATTERS UNDER THESE AGENDA ITEMS WAS SIGNIFICANT TO USG.

(F) DEVELOPMENT OF AIR TRANSPORT IN ESCAP REGION: THE ICAO DEL REPORTED THEIR PLANS TO UNDERTAKE, WITH UNDP SUPPORT, AN ECONOMIC AIR TRANSPORT SURVEY OF ASIA AND PACIFIC COUNTRIES. THE SURVEY IS TO LOWER INSTITUTIONAL AND INVESTMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF PASSENGER AS WELL AS CARGO TRANSPORT. THE AUSTRALIAN DEL ALSO DISCUSSED PLANS OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TO REVIEW ITS INTERNATIONAL AVIATION POLICIES WITH A VIEW TO LOWERING FARES TO AND FROM AUSTRALIA.

12. PROGRAM OF WORK AND PRIORITIES. AS IN PREVIOUS YEARS, REQUESTS WERE MADE FOR UNDP SUPPORT BY SEVERAL DELS, NOTABLY BANGLADESH, PAKISTAN, SRI LANKA AND INDIA IN THAT ORDER, FOR ASSISTANCE TO VARIOUS PROJECTS PROPOSED BY THEM AS THOUGH UNDP HAS UNLIMITED RESOURCES. IN ALMOST EVERY CASE THEIR NEW PROJECT PROPOSALS WERE MADE WITH NO SUGGESTION NOR CONSIDERATION OF DELETING EXISTING LOWER PRIORITY PROJECTS. EARLY IN THE SESSION, UNDP REP INTERVENED TO REQUEST THE SECRETARIAT TO REVIEW ITS LIST OF PIPELINE PROJECTS AND TO RESUBMIT THE ITEMS TO UNDP IN ORDER OF PRIORITY. THE SECRETARIAT'S REFUSAL TO PRIORITIZE THE ITEMS WAS BASED ON THE PREMISE THAT FUNDING MAY BE LOCATED ELSEWHERE TO IMPLEMENT PROJECTS THAT MAY BE LOW ON THE SECRETARIAT'S LIST OF PRIORITIES BUT HIGH ON SOME MEMBER COUNTRY'S LIST OF PRIORITIES.

13. MEETING RAN SMOOTHLY AND EXPEDITIOUSLY WITH A MINIMUM OF CONTROVERSY. THE TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS WING WAS

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MORE SKILLFULLY MANAGED IN CONTRAST TO THE SHIPPING WING.
FULL REPORT WILL BE SUBMITTED WITHIN 30 DAYS.
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Message Attributes

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Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
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